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## ABSTRACT

Forty-eight textbooks in educational psychology published after 1950 were located for review. Half the books were published before 1975 and half following 1975. The purpose of the study was to describe changes in coverage and treatment of individual differences and special populations since the passage of Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) in 1975. Specific questions included: How are the problems of individual differences and/or special populations presented? How is the role of the teacher described in developing solutions to the problems of individual differences and/or special problems? To what extent are categories or labels portrayed as instructionally useful? Results indicated that there have been changes in treatment of individual differences and special populations. Advice from a special populations perspective was much more likely to be definitive and authoritative with regard to the education of such populations, and this treatment often suggested a relatively passive role for teachers and a more active role for specialists. The 48 textbooks and 4 additional references are cited. (PB)

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## What Textbooks Tell Prospective Teachers About Individual Differences and Exceptional Students: Two Divergent Views<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

The old joke says that there are two kinds of people in this world, people who think there are two kinds of people in the world and those who do not. In education, the debate about how many kinds of students there are is probably as old as the joke. The educational debate, however, is serious. The implication for students can be dramatic and of life-long consequence.

A course in educational psychology is a common requirement in teacher education programs. "Individual differences" and "the exceptional student" are two important topics that are typically part of the course content. These topics are particularly important in teacher education because teachers are encouraged to accommodate individual differences in classrooms as well as be responsible for "exceptional" students in accordance with PL 94-142 (McCormick, 1983).

Individual differences has traditionally been a major topic in educational psychology texts and comprised nearly 25% of an early text by Thorndike (Thorndike, 1914). On the other hand, extended textbook coverage of exceptional students has not been common until the 1970s. According to a recent content analysis of educational psychology textbooks by Ash and Love-Clark (1985), individual differences as a topic has fallen dramatically in terms of the number of pages of text coverage while material about the exceptional student has risen dramatically. This change in topical coverage has been particularly acute since 1975, the year in which Public Law 94-142 was passed (Ash & Love-Clark, 1985). The percentage of students labeled "exceptional" in the public schools also has risen dramatically from 1.5% of students in 1948 to 8.3% in 1976 and over 12% of students at present. Because Public Law 94-142 implied an important role for all teachers in the education of exceptional students, increased textbook attention to the topic seems appropriate.

Our experience in teaching this course indicated that this change in textbook coverage was more than a change in number of text pages. There seemed to be important changes in the presentation of this content to prospective teachers. The purpose of the present study was to conduct an analysis of textbooks in educational psychology written since 1960 in order to describe changes in coverage and treatment of individual differences and special populations since the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975. Specifically we asked:

- 1) How are the problems of individual differences and/or special populations presented?

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- 2) How is the role of the teacher described in developing solutions to the problems of individual differences and/or special populations?
- 3) To what extent are categories or labels portrayed as instructionally useful?

Forty-eight textbooks in educational psychology published after 1950 were located for review. Twenty-four were published before 1975 and 24 were published following 1975. Particular attention was devoted to including texts that have been popular texts. Relevant portions of each text were read by both authors to develop responses to the specific questions enumerated above. Initial reading suggested two clearly contrasting presentations on these topics (what Krippendorff (1980) calls thematic units). These two types of presentations were labeled an individual differences (ID) perspective and a special populations (SP) perspective. Generally, the ID perspective is more frequent in texts prior to 1975, but many current textbooks retain an individual difference emphasis. The ID perspective emphasizes the uniqueness of all learners and tends to be cautious in recommending specific systematic accommodations for subsets of students. The SP perspective, on the other hand, presents students as falling in several categories each category requiring specific forms of accommodation by virtue of category membership. Just as it may be difficult to divide mankind into two or more types, categorizing textbooks as one or the other type of presentation is also problematic. In many instances, evidence of both perspectives could be obtained from the same textbook although there are numerous examples of texts that lean heavily to one side.

- 1) How are the problems of individual differences and/or special populations presented?

ID perspective. All students are presented as biologically and experientially unique. Variables such as intelligence, creativity, and learning styles are identified as instructionally relevant. Teachers are advised to be sensitive to variations among students on these variables and to adapt to these variations where possible. Discussion of "exceptional" students tends to emphasize limitations of categorizing students on one dimension for the purpose of devising alternative treatments.

The discipline of educational psychology has strong roots in the realm of individual differences. Early psychologists such as E. L. Thorndike, conducted and reviewed many studies of differences among individuals. In the last paragraph of his early text in educational psychology, Thorndike concluded:

"A group of individuals does not, as a rule, show a separation into two or more groups, all in one being like each other and little like any of those in the other group, or groups. Here again the rule may be verified by searching for exceptions to it. I know of no such. It is indeed a question whether there are any 'types' that are distinct enough to really deserve the name (Thorndike, 1914, p. 410).

This theme has been echoed by many textbooks since that time. More recently, Sprinthall & Sprinthall summed it up as follows:

"As you look within yourself and at the people around you realize that you are a very special and unique being...one of the basic

themes of psychology is that of individual differences. No one is exactly like anyone else." (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1974, p. 303).

SP perspective. Although every child is unique, there are certain groups of children who share characteristics that set them apart from other groups. These "special" populations have handicaps and deficiencies (or gifts and talents) that cannot be met satisfactorily by the classroom teacher and require treatment by specialists. A typical chapter on exceptional students written from this perspective consists of a list of "special" categories of children, a list of their characteristics, and specific suggestions for teaching each category.

Although the SP perspective may be more evident in recent textbooks, the idea that there are categories of people that are distinctly different from the rest is far from novel. In one of his references to this perspective, Thorndike (1914) stated:

Until recently the superstition that a great gulf separated children of normal intellect from the imbeciles and idiots was also very strong in many scientific men (p.409).

More recently, this view was described in "modern" language by Mayer (1987):

Special students possess learner characteristics which are different from other students' learner characteristics. Because they possess special characteristics, these students may require specially designed instruction that is different from regular instruction (i.e. special education). These are the premises underlying the concept of special education for special students (p. 447).

Because the current laws of the United States specifically mention and define several categories of exceptionality, these categorical labels are most frequently found in recent textbooks. Thus, a text by Reilly and Lewis (1983) has a section entitled "learning disabled children" and describes them using the definition that appeared in the 1975 legislation:

Learning disabilities means 'a disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written' (p.421).

Having identified these categories of students, there is tremendous variation in terminology used to further describe the condition. This variation may reflect the conceptual and linguistic jungle that exists in special education. Such disparity of terms must, however, be confusing to prospective teachers.

Language used in some recent texts is surprisingly archaic. Thus, Reilly and Lewis (1983) go on to discuss at some length the condition of "dyssymbolia" which they equate with a "primary learning disability". A further description and explanation of the mentally retarded student (the more recent category label is "mentally disabled") in another recent text adds the term "borderline defective" and goes on to explain:

"Borderline defectives share many of the characteristics of mildly retarded learners described above. In fact, from a teacher's

viewpoint, they may function in the same manner; after all, the difference in learning ability between students with IQs of 68 and 72, for example, is indistinguishable." (Hudgins, Phye, Schau, Theisen, Ames & Ames, 1983, p. 157)

Similarly dated advice was provided by Thornburg (1984) who declared "diagnosis of perceptual-motor functions is very important" and went on to describe assessment tools developed by Kephart and Frostig as well as a page-length table describing the subtests of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (ITPA). The chapter also outlines and explains four categories of learning disabilities: dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction, perceptual, and language.

The variation in terminology as well as lack of current information is particularly evident in categories that require a great deal of subjective judgment for their determination. These "high inference" categories (learning disabilities, mental disabilities, and behavior disorders) are also the categories with the highest current incidence. All teachers are likely to encounter such students in their classrooms. Thus it would seem important that teachers-in-preparation receive a reasonably clear and consistent text presentation about these students, but in fact, just the opposite seems to be true.

- 2) How is the role of the teacher described in developing solutions to the problems of individual differences and/or special populations?

ID Perspective. Textbooks written from what we have termed an ID perspective tend to be rather cautious as well as ambiguous in describing solutions to the problem but tend to emphasize the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the teacher in developing solutions for all children in the classroom. After a discussion of individual differences in intelligence, acquisition, and retention, Edwards (1968) emphasized the primacy of the teacher when he declared:

The report of a psychometrist never replaces a teacher action or completely solves a problem... the teacher remains the crucial element in the formal learning situation and no other agency or person takes his place (p.

Travers (1973) is typical in acknowledging the challenge of providing for individual differences as well as pessimistic with respect to the frequency with which individualized instruction was accomplished in an ordinary school:

"if the school system was typical, then one would expect that teachers took quite minimal steps to individualize instruction. To organize learning in such a way requires great skill on the part of the teacher and a head for planning and organizing (p.233).

Texts written from this perspective often provide some advice for accomplishing this individualization. After noting the wide range of individual differences at every age level, Ausubel (1968), suggested the following strategy for coping with the problem:

As far as possible, the individual student, rather than the class as a whole, must become the working unit for the instructional process.

More recently, Sprinthall (1981) summed up the problem by saying that the key factor was "increasing the accommodative capacity of all classrooms to respond to a broad range of individual differences".

While various instructional strategies have been proposed for accommodating individual differences (IPI, IGE, programmed instruction, to name a few), texts that reflecting an ID perspective do not generally advocate homogenous grouping for instruction. For example, Ausubel (1968) went on to suggest that ability grouping and individualized instruction are two approaches that have been used to accommodate individual differences and he advised that they not be thought of as mutually exclusive. He argued:

Individualization is accomplished more effectively by bringing together children of diverse ability levels in one class (p.265).

Authors who write from the ID perspective are often skeptical of special techniques or methods. As McDonald (1965) put it:

No evidence indicates that we should use radically different methods of instruction for, on the one hand, the gifted, the males, and the creative and on the other hand the retarded, the females, and the conformists... none of these broad categories of entering behavior is... useful in the design of instruction (p. 474).

In addition to a skepticism about special methods for special categories of students, texts expressing an ID perspective emphasize the arbitrariness of group membership. For example, Biehler (1971) cautioned students that "the label does not endow the child with a fixed set of characteristics; it is simply a descriptive verbal symbol that is used to facilitate communication (p. 454). He went on to note the social forces that influence the labels attached to students by quoting a passage from Heber (1961):

A person may change status as a result of changes in social standards or conditions or as a result of changes in efficiency of intellectual functioning, with levels of efficiency always being determined in relation to the behavioral standards and norms for the individuals' chronological age group (Heber, 1961, . 3).

The Biehler text is particularly interesting in that the first edition appeared prior to PL 94-142 and is currently in a fifth edition (Biehler and Snowman, 1986). The early editions appeared to us to be more ID oriented. With each subsequent edition, the SP perspective appeared to grow.

Discussions of special populations in texts written prior to 1970 are typically restricted to children of low intelligence. This reflects the fact that a much smaller percentage of students in public schools were declared "special". Likewise, these special populations were more apt to be educated in entirely segregated settings. The practices and viewpoint of that era is reflected in a comment by

DeCecco (1968) who stated:

For students at either end of the IQ continuum, the very special educational environment they require is often not within the organizational or financial means of the general public school. Rather than water down or enrich the curriculum for a few, special agencies with both public and private support can often more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of exceptionally high or low mentality (p. 116).

Such populations were not considered likely to be found in public schools and advice to teachers about special populations was often brief. After discussing "defective or feeble-minded children...including moron, imbecile, and idiot", Sawrey and Telford (1958) suggested that:

...teacher should be aware of these conditions... there are several good books for treating this subject matter and the teacher should become familiar with them (p. 286)

More recently published texts written from the ID perspective continue to emphasize the importance of good teaching for special populations. They do not, however, portray such teaching as "special", requiring teaching techniques unavailable to "regular" teachers. As Sprinthall (1981) viewed it: "Effective mainstream teaching is the use of procedures common to all good teaching". This theme was expressed in a slightly different way by Siepert (1983) who listed some suggestions for teaching slow learners and added the comment: "these suggestions make good advice for teaching some normal students as well as exceptional ones" (p. 276). Siepert later answered the question "what can teachers do for the emotionally disturbed student?" by responding that "ordinary consideration and support for the student as a person-- neither more nor less" (p. 285) would suffice depending on the nature and severity of the problem.

SP perspective. From this perspective, the current role of the classroom teacher is described primarily as referring students to specialists who can "diagnose" and treat the student. For example, the first responsibility of the regular class teacher listed in a recent text by Biehler and Snowman (1986) is "referral". In a similar vein, Woolfolk (1987) suggests that "students who seldom speak, who use few words or very short sentences, or who rely on gestures to communicate should be referred to a qualified school professional for observation or testing (p. 461).

Recommendations for teaching special students often consist of prescriptive lists of specific methods, techniques, or guidelines that are recommended for each special population (LD, MD, BD, etc.). Biehler and Snowman (1986) included seven specific suggestions for teaching slow learners, six suggestions for rapid learners, nine for disadvantaged learners, and five for learning disabled. Woolfolk (1987) has nine guidelines for hearing impaired students, five for students who stutter, six for learning disabled, twelve for teaching mentally retarded and six for teaching the gifted. Some of these suggestions are taken from the special methods lore (e.g. "use the VAKT method" for learning disabled students (Biehler & Snowman, 1986). Other suggestions are hardly unique to the special population specified. Some examples of these are provided by Biehler and Snowman (1986) who suggest: "encourage supplementary reading and writing"; "foster the development of hobbies and interests"; and "encourage a sense of self-esteem". One final suggestion in this section hints at

broader utility of by suggesting "for learning disabled, see slow learner."

3) To what extent are categories or labels portrayed as instructionally useful?

From the ID perspective, gross generalizations about group differences can be made but these are not necessarily relevant to individual cases. The concept of "overlap", which was used by Thorndike in 1914, is also used by some recent authors (e.g. Mayer 1987) with reference to aptitude-treatment interactions to suggest that group comparisons are of little practical value to the teacher and can even be harmful to students. This idea is evident, for example, in the text by Worell & Stillwell (1981) who state: "Labels are educationally irrelevant." Sprinthall & Sprinthall (1981) are even more pessimistic about the categories that were established by PL 94-142. At one point, they declare: "The classification system is inadequate and the effects are damaging."

Texts reflecting an ID perspective may acknowledge that teachers are expected to refer "exceptional" students for "diagnosis" but also can be blunt about the outcomes. Good & Brophy (1980) made the following observation of the process:

Research on the diagnostic activities of well-trained and highly regarded specialists in such fields as learning disabilities and reading problems reveals that they show very poor agreement with one another, and even with themselves, when they encounter the same case twice (p.528).

Similar cynicism has been attributed to treatments for special categories of students. Thus Good and Brophy (1980) cite studies that led them to conclude:

Data such as these indicate that the whole notion of specialized diagnosis and treatment, while sensible in the abstract, may have a long way to go before it begins to function effectively in practice (p. 528)

A similar note was sounded by Sprinthall & Sprinthall (1981) who declared:

Recently a somewhat cynical educational psychologist commented that in the last decade, all the people who sold used cars, bait-and-switch real estate in Florida, and bust-development machines have moved into the dyslexia business (p. 585)

SP perspective. Texts written from what we have described as an SP perspective are likely to argue that categories and labels have limitations and dangers but are useful in securing special services for children. These categories are also seen as indicating which methods of instruction and which instructional setting is best suited to the individual student. Biehler (1986) sums it up in a key point printed in the text margin: "Labels may cause stigmatization but may also lead to special education" Woolfolk (1987) lists the benefits of labeling (p. 454) pointing out that labels still sometimes serve the purpose of opening the doors to special programs or financial assistance.

### Conclusions and Implications

The results of this study indicate that the treatment of individual differences and special populations in textbooks has changed. These changes reflect in part current special education practices in schools. While it would seem appropriate for texts to reflect practical concerns, the advice given to prospective teachers markedly differs among textbooks. Advice from what we termed a special populations perspective was much more likely to be definitive and authoritative with respect to defining special populations and what should be done to educate them. This treatment often suggested a more passive role for teachers and emphasized the role of specialists. Texts written from what we termed an ID perspective were more likely to stress accommodation on the basis of teacher judgment of the individual rather than the membership of the individual in a particular group. Some information provided in recent texts appeared extremely dated and inaccurate in portraying the education of exceptional students. Given the importance of the topic, textbook authors have an obligation to seek current information about topics in this area.

There is, of course, a dilemma in treating these topics. Fischer and Silvern (1985) noted that is misleading to speak of various groups without noting the wide range of individual differences that occur within groups but equally misleading to speak in terms of individual differences without noting the commonality that occurs across individuals. There is a need for texts to reflect both perspectives and to deal with practical realities as well as current research and theory. Achieving an appropriate balance appears to be a continuing challenge for textbooks in educational psychology.

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bargaining, coalition building, conflict handling, running meetings. It is a model that recognises that conflict is normal in organisations and that the conflict is resolved through negotiation and bargaining. Viewed like this it is for managers a comforting model, a reasonable way of creating order. But there is a less pleasant side of the model - which has been called the 'darker side' of organisational life, (Hoyle, 1982) implying that the exercise of power is not always benign. As noted earlier, Greenfield argues that educational organisations present a plurality of values; but he goes on to say that to get their way in this context, heads can be expected to engage in "persuasion, calculations, guile, persistence, threat or sheer force". Now, perhaps, the organisations as people know them become more recognisable and the following understatement must be admired:

"political action in educational organisations will at times violate formal and informal normative expectations" (Blase 1988).

Using, too, we are told, 'non sanctioned means'. This means in straightforward language that there is a danger that leaders will use any means, fair or foul, to control and dominate the organisation. Everard (1986) comments that he has found in education more examples of inhuman and downright incompetent management than in industry.

In attempting to analyse micro-political tactics it has to be asked:

In which way does coalition forming differ from ganging up?

How does enlisting support from one person differ from playing off one member of staff against another?

What has withholding information or deliberately giving misleading information to do with staff involvement?

What has rigging meetings or fixing agendas to do with open discussion?

Why do we pass on rumours about people?

Why do we stab people in the back?

A quotation from a deputy head about a head sums up the divide and rule aspects of micro-politics:

"I find he's two-faced. He says one thing to one person and then tells a different story to another. He's done this to me and Bill ... trying to split us up, etc." (Ball, 1987, p. 154).

A recent study in the USA on micro-politics in schools enquires into how teachers perceive micro-politics in schools (Blase, 1988). More than a third of teachers identified favouritism as a major political phenomenon. By this they meant that heads used power unfairly to maintain control and domination in the schools. The micro-political practice of favouritism was employed in a number of areas:

1. Interviews for jobs were held when decisions had already been made as to who was to get the job.
2. Selected individuals were picked out for consultation and delegation of authority.
3. Certain teachers were given more freedom than others within the rules of the school.
4. Resources were allocated more generously to favoured teachers (including 'little favours' like access to the office telephone).
5. Favoured teachers were given greater recognition - both formal and informal recognition - picked out for praise.

The way these heads were exercising power was to engage in contracts with these teachers to get them on their side. Obligations were created in order to induce loyalty and gain support. How did teachers view this micro-political behaviour?

The micro-politics engendered states of anger, depression and anxiety. For example 64% of the teachers interviewed expressed anger at the actions of the principal - adjectives used frequently to describe their feelings were 'angry', 'resentful', 'disgusted', 'frustrated'. Fourteen percent of teachers were depressed, using words such as 'powerless', 'helpless' and:

'The formation of cliques and cabals had a negative influence on teacher participation and micro-political approaches violated teachers' expectations about professional autonomy and status.' (Blase, 1988).

On the other hand, this interpretation of micro-politics has been criticised as too narrow; micro-political behaviour need not be all about self-interest and getting your own way by fair means or foul (Jones, 1988). There is it is suggested,

competitive and manipulative behaviour in organisations leading to winners and losers but this type of behaviour is not inevitable. High levels of warmth, loyalty, trust and openness are possible in organisations and manipulative behaviour will in the end be self-defeating. Micro-politics is a reflection of people bringing their different values and perceptions to the workplace and the assumption that politics can be a struggle of reasonable people to get what they consider might be acceptable in the organisation. Micro-political analysis sensitises people to power and the use and abuse of power. Micro-political behaviour is about negotiating around differences, creating tolerance and respect and being sensitive to other people's needs.

The need for the head in the 1990s to negotiate his way through conflicting demands from consumers and the external environment and from school staff and the internal environment will be paramount. The 'good' model of micro-politics could be the key to managerial success if the temptation to be manipulative and Machiavellian can be avoided. The problem is that writers about micro-politics take too anodyne and optimistic a view, treating micro-political approaches as if they were not potentially destructive of the organisation. It might be more encouraging if one did not read things like: "Try to be honest with others - in most cases they reciprocate"; or "How to be a modern Machiavelli".

### *(b) Managerial Model*

The basic model has been around for a long time - from the beginning of the century and F.W. Taylor. The model of neo-Taylorism or the industrialised model, as it is commonly called, stresses increased productivity and reduced costs through the more effective use of resources. Its preoccupations are with a precise statement of objectives, performance measurement; individual appraisal, tight financial control and the creation of a corporate image to ensure the organisation's market share (Spencer, 1969). The need to control costs and output will in turn lead to tighter supervision of the professional work force, while pleasing the consumer will have high priority. The vocabulary of the head will include action plans, targets, programme implementation and incentive schemes, as the language of industry begins to permeate schools.

In the model one can see the head exerting increased centralist control, seeing himself in the mould of the tough, uncompromising industrial manager. As financial control is increasingly delegated to schools and in case budgets get overspent and targets are not met, heads will want to take on more responsibilities themselves. To ensure that the school survives in a competitive age, more control and less freedom is called for, with schools adopting traditional industrial models, thus allowing less autonomy for the teachers while increasing the emphasis on control and status. Process will be more important than people and the head will

assume a "macho", Rambo-like style in an attempt to hold sway over staff and the consumer public. In case it is considered that this is an exaggeration, some very recent research on schools shows that the professional culture of participation and co-operation is being eroded by managerial-like approaches.

### **British Industry**

#### *In the Past*

'factory' tradition

management v workers

'them and us' conflict

alienated, instrumental attitudes among workers

therefore tight controls

#### *Recent Trends*

successful companies trying to get away from factory tradition by:

- less emphasis on STATUS
- developing more AUTONOMY
- relaxing unnecessary CONTROLS
- creating flatter HIERARCHIES
- fostering a unified CULTURE

### **British Schools**

#### *In the Past*

'community' tradition

a unified ethos

relative consensus

most staff committed above and beyond the minimum

great degree of autonomy

#### *Recent Trends*

problems created by increased school size, rapid pace of change, re organisation, bizarre salary structures, low pay/union action

- more emphasis on STATUS
- erosion of AUTONOMY
- imposition of CONTROLS
- steep HIERARCHIES
- MANAGEMENT IDEAS\*

\* Often inappropriate or out-of-date ones from the 'factory' tradition.

(Weightman, 1988)

So while industry is stressing the autonomy of workers, reducing status differences between managers and workers and enhancing consultation and co-operation, schools are tending to do the opposite because industrial management is

perceived (not out of experience, in many cases) as a narrow form of Taylorism concerned with measurement and control.

The most controversial aspect of the managerial model may be that teachers could be reduced to units of production turning out the standardised product of the core curriculum. As the product becomes rationalised and unitised, the skills that teachers have developed of "setting curriculum goals, establishing content, designing lessons ... individualising instruction ..." are lost (Apple, 1988). This amounts to a deskilling of teachers which, if augmented by economic management, dedicated to efficient production, will also mean a disempowering of teachers.

The managerial ideology is a very persuasive one which has taken a grip on government thinking about the public sector. Managerialism has seduced the Civil Service, Health Service and Education. (see the Audit Commission). When Mrs Thatcher states that: "We need to lay down what it is children are expected to be taught in school and more than that, we need to know whether they are learning it", it has an immediate appeal to monopolistic and mechanistic leadership. It must also be said that the techniques of managerialism are being employed to implement powerful political beliefs, yet the nature of the techniques almost implies a value-free scientific approach to management. However, despite these difficulties with the model, it does have something to offer and, in terms of giving direction to the organisation, quality control and corporate identify, as the research report mentioned above reveals, seems to appeal to heads. It is certainly in tune with the political philosophy of the times. An analysis by Getzels (1977) describes some of the pillars of Taylorism: the work success ethic when the values of material achievement took precedence over values of human beings; competitive industrialism which epitomized the maxim 'the race is to the swift' and stated that the primary responsibility was to oneself rather than to any collectivity; puritan morality marking respectability, thrift, self-restraint and cleanliness as the signs of common decency and sloth a sin second only to idolatry.

### **Critique of the Micro-political and Managerial Models**

Both the micro-political and managerial models have weaknesses. The micro-political model appears to imply an increase in the intensity of micro-political activities in order to arrive at some sort of agreed values, common understandings or corporate culture which will give direction to the school. The managerial model encompasses the imposition of consensus through increased control and measurement of performance. The reality is that both models are directed at maintaining power at the level of senior staff. In the managerial approach the desire for and maintenance of power is more obvious but even corporate culture can be politically manipulated (Bates, 1987) and evidence shows the micro-political model to be equally based on the aggregation of power. Here the negotiation element is

continuously usurped by the will to get one's own way on the part of the head. These top down, control models, keeping power at the top, are alien to many of the professional values held in schools and take us some way from the vision of the leading professional/chief executive model. The managerial model, for example, could in its most extreme form lead to a splitting of the management function from the professional. The implication of the managerial approach is that management is similar in all organisations and schools can be managed by anyone with management skills and knowledge - while academic leadership would be carried out by the professional (Handy, 1984). Both models tend to devalue professionalism and are alien to the values of a professional group. What is perhaps worse is that the models are based on beliefs and practices which many industrial companies are rapidly rejecting. Schools are apparently running counter to what is passing as management gospel these days. (Reid et al, 1987).

### Searching for Models

One difficulty in finding a model is that we do not know enough about managers and their behaviour in schools. There are far too few studies of senior staff in action in schools and we have tended to ignore the 'more elusive idiographic and inspirational aspects of the role' (Houle, 1986, p. 102). The Polytechnic of Wales in its research work in education management has been trying to correct our failure to understand the important ways in which a person (i) defines situations, (ii) becomes aware of alternative courses of action, (iii) evaluates the consequences of action and (iv) considers these implications for his own social world (Eden et al, 1979). One method which has been developed is the use of a technique called 'Repertory Grid' based on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory which allows managers to construct their managerial world through their own interpretation and so build up a picture of the many ways in which individual managers perceive their jobs. The approach is strongly idiographic and interpretative. In putting forward his theory, Kelly believed that man invents for himself 'a representational model of the world which allows him to make sense out of it and enables him to chart a course of behaviour in relation to it.' (Bannister and Mair, 1969, p.6).

Kelly's concern is with the ways individuals choose to anticipate events and how 'each person characteristically evokes for his convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relationships between constructs'. Each person has a personal contract system or 'personally leaned interpretations' (Mair, 1970, p. 161) which he uses as a way of categorising similarities and differences which he perceives in an environment. Personal construct theory is a set of rules for making behaviour intelligible and Kelly asserts that the explanation of human behaviour incorporates 'scanning man's undertaking, the questions man asks, the lines of enquiry he instigates and the strategies he employs' (Kelly, 1969, p. 16). The Repertory Grid technique is a method of eliciting constructs and

assessing the mathematical relationships between them. It also allows comparisons across grids. It is a way of bringing to the surface people's perceptions, attitudes or concepts uncontaminated by the researcher.

The second problem in looking for an alternative model is that not enough is known about the relationship between the behaviour of managers and effectiveness in schools; in recent studies of secondary school effectiveness 'the leadership or management style of head teachers is seriously neglected' (Reynolds, 1988). In other research findings the importance of several key leadership qualities is emphasised. These include among others: positive or purposeful leadership, instructional leadership, vision and setting high professional standards. But what sort of behaviour by heads in what sort of situation brings about effective schools is not analysed in any depth. We need to know more about which actions are useful and constructive, which are not so useful or constructive. What actions are effective, ineffective, what are good or bad? There seems a strong case for focusing in the immediate future on the effectiveness of senior staff in leading schools (Hughes, 1988).

In the Polytechnic we are making some attempt to overcome these deficiencies in the design of our Master's programme. In this programme, teachers are acting as researchers inside their own institution, helping other managers (and themselves, of course) to reflect on their actions and to develop judgements about the soundness of those actions, thus encouraging a deeper analysis of practice. This form of action research can help us interpret the understandings and intentions of those exercising power within the organisation:

"In the action research process, reflection and action are held in dialectal tension, each informing the other through a process of planned change, monitoring, reflection and modification." (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.198).

This deliberate involvement of practitioners in analysing and changing practice within their own organisation:

"involves practitioners directly in theorizing their own practice and revising their theories self critically in the light of their practical consequences." (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 198).

What must be ensured is that when the researchers unearth their accounts, their 'living experiences', of the effects and limitations of action, this evidence is presented to a wider world through publication and dissemination.

## The Way Forward

Few action studies, then, have been carried out in schools from a position of analysing managerial power and managerial intention through action and this failure has not helped to clarify the state of confusion about managerial attitudes in schools. One other major reason is discernable as to why academics in the field of education management have failed to come up with the view of schools as 'managed organisations' - this is the considerable fear of offering over-simplified and over-generalised prescriptions to managers. Acutely aware of the complexities of issues within organisations, we favour a multi-paradigm approach, throwing light into the darkness by a series of small torches rather than by one powerful beam. How is it, we wonder, that management experts outside education have come up with concepts which can act as a guidance for managerial behaviour? A number of studies, including those in the 'excellence' series (Peters and Waterman, 1982, Peters, 1988, Grinyer et al, 1988, Goldsmith and Clutterbuck, 1984) come up with clear views of what managers should do to create effective organisations. Indeed, Tom Peters' latest book in the series, entitled *Thriving on Chaos* (Peters, 1988), is subtitled 'A handbook for a management revolution'. In this book Peters is not afraid to tell managers what to do and 45 prescriptions specify what managers at every level ought to do. He even has the temerity to suggest that his prescriptions could be the basis for a new theory of management. We have to admit, too, that the message of 'excellence' from the earlier books was so beguiling that many sought ways in which schools could be managed to fit these concepts (Handy, 1984).

One sometimes has a sinking feeling that while education managers have indulged in increasingly esoteric debates about the nature of organisations, others from detailed studies of 'real' organisations and managers can now come and tell us what to do and how to do it. After all, what Peters and others claim to have done is investigate companies, find out why some were excellent and tell us what managers did to achieve excellence. Deceptively simple but effective, if the response to Peters' work from practising managers is anything to go by.

The question now has to be asked: "Why has it not been possible to build management theory for schools based on effective practice?" Many schools are managed effectively; better, in some cases, than industrial companies. Even if it is done somewhat imperfectly can a managerial model be built for schools which is not naive, over-simplistic and over-generalised but is identifiable and meaningful? As stated above, more studies of effective schools in action are needed if these questions are to be answered satisfactorily; meanwhile, as a topic for debate, it is proposed to put together some key managerial prescriptions for schools. It is an eclectic model of 12 key prescriptions taking, in effect, the most valuable parts of

the LP/CE, managerial and micro-political models. The prescriptive model also draws upon studies of effective schools (e.g. Rutter, 1979 and Mortimore, 1988), the studies of managers in action (e.g. Jenkins, 1985, Hall et. al, 1985), and the more general literature on 'excellence' (Peters 1982, etc.). Because of the fragmentary nature of the research, the prescriptions inevitably reveal a degree of personal choice and analysis but it is believed that there are sufficient indicators in the available research on education management to guide heads and senior staff in the ways they could create effective schools. As a source of debate a model with 12 key prescriptions is offered for the head in the 1990s.

## A Model for Schools - 12 Key Prescriptions

### 1. *The head will plan*

Lack of planning is a weakness. Studies have shown that ambiguous expectations, poorly defined goals, a lack of direction cause feelings of frustration and confusion in staff (Blase, 1987, Rutter, 1979). To counteract this the head can use planning as a form of participation and control rather than relying on rules and procedures. Thus, everybody can be involved in planning on a bottom-up basis, that is - all staff and not a favourite few.

### 2. *The head will have a vision*

He will be able to create and communicate to staff and to the consumer a view of the future and where the organisation is going. The leader makes sense of the world around him and its conflicting demands and shares this vision with his staff. Described as philosophic competence (Barrow, 1976), this is the ability 'to develop and live an enabling and empowering vision' (Peters, 1988, p. 398).

### 3. *The head will be a problem-solver*

The head will solve problems, however small, rather than defer or ignore them. He does not have to solve them himself but ensures that problems are resolved. He will always follow things through.

### 4. *The head will be a risk-taker*

The head will encourage staff to try things (Peters and Waterman, 1988). Instead of a preference for stability and a reluctance to change, he will encourage staff to see change as a continuous and normal process. Risk-taking and creativity are seen as more important than conformity and safe

behaviour. He will not blame staff if things go wrong but will support, praise and be accessible. He will reduce bureaucracy to a minimum and will not work through rules and procedures. Entrepreneurship will be fostered.

#### *5. The head will be open and trusting*

He will demand total integrity both from himself and the staff (Peters, 1988). There will be a climate of openness and trust. Inevitably there will be differences of values and attitudes but conflict will be resolved by open debate, not by manipulative or Machiavellian techniques. He will diminish micro-politics and treat them as a description not a prescription (Glatter, 1981).

#### *6. The head will care for his staff above all else*

Schools are small enough to make each member of staff feel important. The head makes each member of staff's welfare and development his concern. He will treat staff as his most valuable asset and make staff development a major priority.

#### *7. The head will empower staff*

The head will devolve power to teams and individuals within the school. Power will be given to people nearest to the consumer. He will be looking for new structural arrangements within the school to reduce the existing emphasis on status and hierarchy, e.g. using deputies not as role-fillers but as leaders of task forces. Staff will be granted the level of autonomy they can handle. There will be only necessary centralisation of power in the hands of the head.

#### *8. The head will create fair systems*

The head will not abuse power by employing favouritism, making arbitrary decisions and being inconsistent (Blase, 1987). He will set up fair systems for selection and promotion and for allocating resources for learning and staff development. He will be seen as being as fair as possible by staff.

#### *9. The head will be a strong instructional leader*

Leaders in effective schools appear to be involved in discussions about the curriculum and to influence teaching approaches while allowing much of the control to be with teachers. Fullan (1982) argues that curriculum change and development is likely to occur when heads play a direct active role in

leading the process of change. This does not necessarily imply that the heads are experts in curriculum content but that they exhibit leadership in curriculum planning and implementation. The role of curriculum facilitator to ensure that the institution has clear curriculum guidelines which are transformed into effective practice appears a crucial one. "The head is the critical person for better or worse, when it comes to school (curriculum) planning." (Fullan, 1982).

#### ***10. The head will stress quality***

He will set high standards and expectations. He will not accept second rate work or effort. Evaluation and appraisal will be used regularly not as a punishment but constructively as a means of quality assurance. There will be tight control of performance.

#### ***11. The head will view the customer with delight***

Everything will be looked at as if through the eyes of the customer. The head will be in tune with customer needs and will create a corporate image for the school as an embodiment of this quality.

#### ***12. The head will do the difficult tasks***

The head will not be involved in day to day administration. He will get a bursar or an equivalent to take over most of the financial control. He will then be released to concentrate on key management tasks.

### **Conclusion**

This paper began by describing the major changes in the context in which heads will be operating in the 1990s. These changes present challenges for heads, while at the same time providing opportunities for heads to function more powerfully at school level. After analysing a number of models the paper concludes by offering for debate (and much against the spirit of work in the field of education management), a prescriptive model, consisting not by any means of new ideas but those ideas which can offer a basis for action by heads. The prescriptions seem idealistic, if not pious (and will have no appeal to cynics), but while tailored for schools, are not out of line with what managers in other industries are seeking - managers who already operate in a competitive, consumer-led world.

A recent report of a training programme for a major insurance company reports that the managers wanted to end inter-divisional rivalries, to stop blaming and criticising each other, to remove the tendency to resort to manipulation and

politics and the desire to over-control staff. They asked for a shared vision, getting things done without bruising other people, being entrepreneurial, using creativity and building trust and support (Allen and Nixon, 1988). A survey to find the 100 best companies in the UK talks of the best companies stripping out much of the hierarchy, working in small teams, having a positive approach to getting things done, and a very caring attitude to the workers. In the not-so-good companies, incidentally, watching your back was the most pressing business of the day.

What appears in these companies is much of what was being recommended for schools in the LP/CE model. Regretfully, the model never came to full fruition, partly because the hierarchical, status-led, role-fixed characteristics of schools refused to go away; partly because heads were fearful of trusting staff too much and treating them as mature and autonomous professionals; partly because heads felt compelled to spend time on administrative and maintenance tasks. However, we were on the right road and heads in the past 20 years have achieved some remarkable successes in managing schools against a background of public scepticism and scarce resources. The effective school literature indicates that many of the characteristics of 'good' companies have already been achieved in schools or are there for the taking. Schools have been creative and inventive; they are full of people who want to care and who want to achieve education of good quality. The new management prescription for industry is surely nearer in character to the professional model than it is to the managerial or micro-political models. The prescription combines enterprise and proactivity with concern and integrity, a sort of caring entrepreneurship, which industry feels is the way to cope with an uncertain future.

Schools can develop in this way without too much trauma and it is devoutly hoped that schools may not be tempted to believe that increased control, tougher approaches and a clever use of micro-political tactics are the answers to consumer demands and measurements of performance. Education managers are ideally placed to achieve excellence if they ignore (unlike Local Authorities and their seduction by Corporate Management, (Housego, 1985)), the blandishments of micro-politics or the easy virtues of managerialism and instead build theories out of the distinctiveness of good practice in schools. The model of heads as enterprising or entrepreneurial professionals has considerable appeal for the competitive years ahead, with its combination of the caring values of professionals and the proactive skills of the entrepreneur. But we will require to know how heads administer the prescription in practice if we are to build theories of management for schools.

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Self Image

P.A. Duignan

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